

CONGRESSMAN

# Jimmy Panetta

PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE 20TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA



Dear Friends,

This year, Congress is working to pass the next Farm Bill. As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I have the unique and important opportunity to help craft this bill. My focus for this Farm Bill is on the needs of our district, including investments in research and specialty crops, support for our conventional and organic growers, and strengthening the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and our rural communities.

On April 18, the House Agriculture Committee held its mark-up of the Farm Bill, a key formal step a committee takes for a bill to advance to the floor. At this meeting, members of the committee and I discussed and debated the text.

I was pleased that the bill included increased funding for the National Organic Program, from \$15 million to \$24 million, continued support for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and new funding for organic trade enforcements and the Organic Data Initiative.

While I commend the continued funding of the Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development Program, and Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops, I have advocated for and requested double funding for these programs to support our producers during times of trade uncertainty. I voiced similar concerns about the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, which was reauthorized but requires increased funding and strengthened language for mechanization, as well as the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative. The bill text included a \$10 million increase in funding for organic research, but I introduced legislation and am fighting to increase funding to \$50 million a year. I was disappointed to see that the elimination of the Organic Certification Cost Share Program, and will continue to work to reauthorize and strengthen these programs that are critically important to our agriculture industry.

I was also frustrated by the proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The focal point of this bill is the implementation of an unproven, expensive, and bureaucratic proposal to change the way SNAP Employment & Training

operates at the expense of food benefits.

Close to eighty percent of the funding for the Farm Bill is dedicated to SNAP and over 68,000 households on the central coast of California depend on SNAP benefits for their next meal. A majority of the recipients of SNAP benefits are children and seniors, but the program also supports working families, active-duty military, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Congress should be working to help them effectively transition out of poverty and improve their lives, not implement an untested program that fails to help them make ends meet.

However, this mark-up is just the first step in a larger process. Next, the bill will be brought to the House floor for a vote. Meanwhile, the Senate is working on a bipartisan Farm Bill that will be debated and marked-up in the Senate Agriculture Committee next month, and be brought to the Senate floor for a vote. The bills will then be conferenced by members from both the House and the Senate to negotiate one bill to then be voted on in both chambers. If that final bill passes both chambers, it will be sent to the President for signature and become law.

During this process, I will continue to call for greater investments in programs that will benefit our district and our agriculture industry instead of keeping the status quo. I remain committed to working with members on both sides of the aisle to produce a bipartisan Farm Bill that addresses the needs of the agriculture industry, expands opportunities for farmers and farmworkers, supports economic growth in rural areas, and alleviates hunger in our communities.

### **Other Legislation:**

Along with Congressmen Neal Dunn (R-FL), I co-introduced a bill to eliminate unnecessary trade barriers that are hurting American exports and hindering innovation and advances in agricultural production technologies, including biotechnology. The [Growing American Food Exports Act of 2018](#) amends the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to update a USDA Foreign Agricultural Service program that funds efforts to harmonize international reviews of agricultural production technologies, which will lead to a stronger export economy and trade relations for the United States.

### **April Highlights:**

- I visited with San Benito County cattle ranchers to hear how they are working to implement conservation initiatives into their ranching practices. I then stopped by BarSZ Ranch to see firsthand how agritourism is helping our rural economies.



*Rep. Panetta talking with cattle ranchers and the children of the BarSZ Ranch owners about the importance of land conservation and agritourism.*

- A bipartisan group of California members sent a letter to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to express strong concerns about the implications retaliatory tariffs on the Chinese could have on California agriculture. We will continue to work in a bipartisan effort to protect international markets for our producers. [Read the letter here.](#)

- I am honored to have been selected by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) as a 2018 Innovator in Biotechnology Award recipient. The award recognizes Members of Congress “who have been collaborative partners, advocates, and champions for the biotechnology and life sciences industries,” according to the group.



*Ted Love, BIO Board Member, President and CEO Global Therapeutics and Adam Lotspike, California Life Sciences Association present the award to Rep. Panetta*

- Congratulations to Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, the outgoing director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture, on his successful tenure! Dr. Ramaswamy has been a strong advocate of agriculture research during his time as USDA, and I wish him the best in his future role. I look forward to continuing our work together to better address the research needs of the agriculture community.





*Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, the outgoing director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and Rep. Panetta*

- I joined my friends and colleagues Congressman Jim Costa and Congressman Jeff Denham on the House Floor to reflect on the life and legacy of Rick Antle. As President and CEO of Tanimura & Antle, Rick was both a giant in personality and professional impact. His dedication to innovation and ingenuity will continue to propel the Salad Bowl of the World forward. [Watch our remarks below:](#)



# Congressman Panetta Remarks on the House Floor

Remembering the Life of Rick Antle  
with Reps. Costa and Denham

@RepJimmyPanetta

April 26, 2018

As I continue to work on the 2018 Farm Bill and other agriculture issues affecting the Central Coast, I want to hear from you about your questions, concerns, and needs. Please call or contact me at my Congressional offices in Salinas, Santa Cruz, or Washington, D.C. or through <https://panetta.house.gov>. Please do not hesitate to reach out and let me know how I can better serve you.

Sincerely,



JIMMY PANETTA  
Member of Congress